

or made available with obviously fictitious substitutes and with a notification such as the following as a preamble:

Names of parties and certain other identifying details have been removed (and fictitious names substituted) in order to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of the individuals involved.

[40 FR 12793, Mar. 21, 1975, as amended at 47 FR 54943, Dec. 7, 1982. Redesignated at 49 FR 23050, June 4, 1984, and amended at 52 FR 43073, Nov. 9, 1987; 56 FR 47417, Sept. 19, 1991]

#### § 612.9 Fees to be charged—definitions.

For the purpose of these Guidelines:

(a) All the terms defined in the Freedom of Information Act apply.

(b) A *statute specifically providing for setting the level of fees for particular types of records* (5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4)(A)(vi)) means any statute that specifically requires a government agency, such as the Government Printing Office (GPO) or the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), to set the level of fees for particular types of records, in order to:

(1) Serve both the general public and private sector organizations by conveniently making available government information;

(2) Ensure that groups and individuals pay the cost of publications and other services which are for their special use so that these costs are not borne by the general taxpaying public;

(3) Operate an information dissemination activity on a self-sustaining basis to the maximum extent possible; or

(4) Return revenue to the Treasury for defraying, wholly or in part, appropriated funds used to pay the cost of disseminating government information. Statutes, such as the User Fee Statute, which only provide a general discussion of fees without explicitly requiring that an agency set and collect fees for particular documents do not supersede the Freedom of Information Act under section (a)(4)(A)(vi) of that statute.

(c) The term *direct costs* means those expenditures which an agency actually incurs in searching for and duplicating (and in the case of commercial requesters, reviewing) documents to respond

to a FOIA request. Direct costs include, for example, the salary of the employee performing work (the basic rate of pay for the employee plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits) and the cost of operating duplicating machinery. Not included in direct costs are overhead expenses such as costs of space, and heating or lighting the facility in which the records are stored.

(d) The term *search* includes all time spent looking for material that is responsive to a request, including page-by-page or line-by-line identification of material within documents. NSF shall ensure that searching for material is done in the most efficient and least expensive manner so as to minimize costs for both the agency and the requester. For example, NSF shall not engage in line-by-line search when merely duplicating an entire document would prove the less expensive and quicker method of complying with a request. “Search” should be distinguished, moreover, from “review” of material in order to determine whether the material is exempt from disclosure (see paragraph (f) of this section). Searches may be done manually or by computer using existing programming.

(e) The term *duplication* refers to the process of making a copy of a document necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Such copies can take the form of paper copy, microform, audio-visual materials, or machine readable documentation (e.g., magnetic tape or disk), among others. The copy provided must be in a form that is reasonably usable by requesters.

(f) The term *review* refers to the process of examining documents located in response to a request that is for a commercial use (see paragraph (g) of this section) to determine whether any portion of any document located is permitted to be withheld. It also includes processing any documents for disclosure, e.g., doing all that is necessary to excise them and otherwise prepare them for release. Review does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(g) The term *‘commercial use’ request* refers to a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial,

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trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining whether a requester properly belongs in this category, NSF shall determine the use to which a requester will put the documents requested. Moreover, where NSF has reasonable cause to doubt the use to which a requester will put the records sought, or where that use is not clear from the request itself, NSF shall seek additional clarification before assigning the request to a specific category.

(h) The term *educational institution* refers to a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, and an institution of vocational education, which operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(i) The term *non-commercial scientific institution* refers to an institution that is not operated on a "commercial" basis as that term is referenced in paragraph (g) of this section, and which is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(j) The term *representative of the news media* refers to any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term *news* means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of "news") who make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general public. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive. Moreover, as traditional methods of news delivery evolve (e.g., electronic dissemination of newspapers through telecommunications services), such alternative media would be included in this category. In the case of "freelance" journalists, they may be regarded as working for a news organization if they can demonstrate a solid

basis for expecting publication through that organization, even though not actually employed by it. A publication contract would be the clearest proof, but NSF may also look to the past publication record of a requester in making this determination.

[52 FR 43074, Nov. 9, 1987]

### § 612.10 Fees to be charged—general.

NSF shall charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs they incur. Moreover, NSF shall use the most efficient and least costly methods to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA. NSF will contract with private sector services to locate, reproduce and disseminate records in response to FOIA requests when that is the most efficient and least costly method. When doing so, however, NSF shall ensure that the ultimate cost to the requester is no greater than it would be if NSF itself had performed these tasks. In no case will NSF contract out responsibilities which the FOIA provides that it alone may discharge, such as determining the applicability of an exemption, or determining whether to waive or reduce fees. In addition, NSF shall ensure that when documents that would be responsive to a request are maintained for distribution by agencies operating statutory-based fee schedule programs (see definition in § 612.9(b), such as the NTIS, they inform requesters of the steps necessary to obtain records from those sources.

(a) Manual searches for records. Whenever feasible, NSF shall charge at the salary rate(s) (i.e., basic pay plus 16 percent) of the employee(s) making the search. However, where a homogeneous class of personnel is used exclusively (e.g., all administrative/clerical, or all professional/executive), NSF may establish an average rate for the range of grades typically involved. Thus, for each one-quarter hour after the first quarter hour, for search of a record by clerical personnel, the charge is \$2.50. For a nonroutine, nonclerical search by professional personnel, for example, where the task of determining which records fall within a request and search requires professional or managerial time, the charge is \$7.50 for each one